**Black Isle Partnership (BIP)**

**Zoom Meeting 1000 4 May 2021**

**Present:** Gordon Adam (GA) (host, Highland Councillor and BIP), Julian Paren (Minute taker and BIP), Martin Sherring (Transition Black Isle and Highland Good Food Partnership), Becky Richmond (Black Isle Tourism Team), Neil Cameron (Resolis CC), Anne Phillips (Rosemarkie and Fortrose CC and Rosemarkie Amenities Association), Jon Palmer (Chair BIP), Nigel Shapcott (Cromarty Development Trust), Jennifer Barclay (Highland Councillor), Peter Ratcliffe (Cromarty CC), Helena Macleod (Kessock Kindness and Residents Association of North Kessock), Diane Agnew (Ward Manager, Highland Council), Vanessa Halhead (BIP), Jill Stoner (Cromarty Cares), Sheila Currie (Transition Black Isle), Alison Petch (Culbokie Community Trust), Hannah MacSween (Muir of Ord Hub), Megan Mackenzie (Black Isle Cares), Helen Robinson (Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust).

**Agenda 2. Waste and funding application for Waste project (Martin Sherring (MS), Transition Black Isle and Highland Good Food Partnership)**

MS introduced the proposed Lottery Bid application from Keep Scotland Beautiful that had been already discussed with Transition Black Isle, the Highland Good Food Partnership and the Black Isle Tourism Team. The aim was to parcel up a Highland-wide bid perhaps for £1.5 million to provide facilities comparable with the Central Belt. Groups from Skye and Lochaber had expressed interest.

After an initial light application had been well received which included some local Black Isle support, the time had come to plan the bid in greater detail. Three strands had been identified. 1/ Food waste which MoO Food were the main instigators, 2/ Waste caused by single-use plastics especially in the hospitality sector, and 3/Waste caused by the turnover of clothing related to fast fashion and to increase the availability of pre-loved clothing often benefitting local charitable causes.

MS had come to find out which organisations at the Community level would give some time to see this area developed locally in addition to Transition Black Isle and the Black Isle Tourism Team. If successful the funding could attract a part time staff member for the Black Isle or a full-time post if Inverness was included.

Jon Palmer suggested that unless louder voices prevailed, the Black Isle might deserve a tenth of the funding worth £50k a year for three years.

Becky Richmond (BITT) said that BITT had agreed to join a Black Isle Waste Working Group to create the best case for funding, and nominated Rose Grant and Anne Phillips. It was noted that Sarah MacDonald Taylor was combating waste through her team at Chanonry Point, but was not so far aware of all the bid details.

Becky reminded all that the Community Councils should not be excluded from a Waste Group as they had good contacts in the community.

Gordon Adam said he would send MS (for the Working Group) contact details of the chairs of the Community Councils.

ACTION GORDON

Vanessa Halhead enquired whether there would be education materials funded in the bid to help people understand the Reduce element of Reduce, reuse, recycle.

MS confirmed that backyard waste was part of the programme. Care was needed to discover what actually made economic sense at the Community Level. Village scale digesters might be appropriate but staff funds as well as capital costs were incurred and the viability was not clear. MS highlighted the successful approach of MOO Food that at a Community scale was combining growing schemes with cooking training and food waste appreciation. MS noted that although Inverness City had a dedicated food waste collection service from businesses, much of it ended up in landfill.

VH asked if Zero Waste shops where bulk items were sold without plastic wrappings were part of the bid. MS said this was absent from the first stage application.

Nige Shapcott mentioned a Volunteer Composting Project in Cromarty that had struggled even in a period of fine weather and people with time on their hands.

MS concluded the Agenda item, by requesting that anybody interested in participating in a Black Isle Waste Working Group should e-mail him or leave a message in the chat facility. He hoped a handful of people would emerge with experiences of past successes and failures. Together they would focus on a coherent Black Isle bid as part of the Highland-wide funding KSB were seeking.

**Agenda 1. Plans for a Wellbeing Week**

Jon Palmer said a Working Group was being formed for the Black Isle Wellbeing Week just four weeks away. JP urged those present to think of people who could volunteer to help –people who were not overcommitted like so many in the Tuesday Group!

ACTION: ALL. Consider approaching others to help plan the detail of a Black Isle Wellbeing Week.

JP argued that Wellbeing was central to all we do. In outline the proposals were that there would be three morning sessions. On Monday the focus would be on Young People, on Wednesday the focus on Befriending led by Helena Macleod, and on Friday the focus on Taking Care of Ourselves (including depression and bereavement) led by Patrick Mullery. Evening sessions on Tuesday and Thursday would be led by a number of active Black Isle groups and societies with virtual visits to events in their meeting areas. The plans were all subject to review by Highland and Islands Enterprise who would have to approve a change of funding direction within the area of Wellbeing. Jon and Helena were positive of an approval, but the outcome would be known within two days.

Helena Macleod said her sessions would be used to promote and launch a new Befriending Service for the Black Isle.

Jill Stoner said her Wellbeing concerns at the present were focused on its financial aspects with poverty really apparent and people needing practical advice. In addition she sensed more fear coming out of the current lockdown than was experienced in the previous summer.

Helena Macleod that there was real anxiety in the community, especially the impact of tourists who were to be welcomed for the economic recovery of the area.

Helen Charley volunteered to be the Wellbeing representative for Cromarty Cares and enquired what the next steps were.

Jon Palmer announced there would be a Teams Meeting for the group on Friday. He saw the audience for the week being everybody and anybody on the Black Isle, but including some who have a real understanding of wellbeing.. Although the planning would be rushed, JP said it was a highly appropriate time to hold a Wellbeing Week. The week would be a first step in truly confronting what wellbeing means, and what practical steps could be taken to enhance wellbeing. JP said he was heartened to see the Cromarty trikes out again, and he had heard tell of how much some fresh air was appreciated by folk who were normally housebound. In conclusion JP said that if the week were only to involve 30-40 people it would be beneficial.

Alison Petch (Culbokie Community Trust) was worried that there was a polarisation in the week from the people who want help and support on Monday and Wednesday to a different audience on Friday. She was worried about folk being “pigeon-holed” in the thinking of the week, and drew attention to the importance in the language used to describe the sessions.

Vanessa Halhead said the Friday session had much broader appeal, but she hoped the week could be more upbeat, and for everybody to consider how they could make life so much better for other people.

Alison () asked for people to join the week’s activities and showcase what they offered the Black Isle in a positive way. She hoped groups outside of Cromarty would contribute to the programme.

JP said the Monday focus on young people had created one problem. Fortrose Academy was in an exam week, so he was seeing the opportunity to focus on Primary School age pupils.

Di Agnew said she could provide contact details for Head Teachers and also mentioned Fiona Richardson of the Mid Ross Community Partnership.

Becky Richmond mentioned The Sunday Club that was based in Cromarty that attracted children from all across the Black Isle.

Megan (Black Isle Cares) mentioned that children under five years old had benefited from a new group called The Black Isle Lockdown Babies.

Gordon Adam recommended a GP practice in Alness where Outdoor Activity was being prescribed as a treatment.

JP said he was looking forward to arranging a Teams Meeting on Friday for those who had so far joined a Steering Group for the Wellbeing Week.

**Agenda 3. News from the Communities**

Helena Macleod (RANK). The Community Larder now has electricity and a Photo Opportunity was created. Communications are improving between the North Kessock community groups. HM is liaising with Becky Richardson on the NatureScot funding.

Hannah MacSween (Muir of Ord Hub) mentioned a wealth of activities concerned with Wellbeing, including practical sessions and taster sessions in yoga, walking, blogs, and Zoom sessions on mental health, relaxation, decluttering your house, neck stretches etc. MoO had produced leaflets and done some desk exercises in recovery planning. MoO would be starting up other events slowly as confidence built, and plans for events like outdoor picnics were planned for June/July.

Helen Charley (Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust) reported that the public conveniences were still unopened and RAFT were doing their best to push for more progress.

Neil Cameron (Resolis Community Council) said he hoped to be better able to report on activities in Resolis in the future.

Alison Petch (Culbokie Community Trust) reported that the Active Travel Project in the village was ongoing with public briefings/consultations on-line and at the Culbokie Market. Tea/coffee and snacks were now available at the Culbokie Market, where the plans for the new village centre were displayed. The village had organised a Ferintosh litter pick, and 19 bags were collected and disposed of by Highland Council, for which many thanks.

Sheila Currie (Transition Black Isle) was thanked for the latest informative TBI newsletter that went to 300 recipients.

Anne Philips (FRCC) mentioned her involvement with the NatureScot/KSB Waste Bid and the ongoing discussions on traffic management along the promenade in Rosemarkie. She said that Scottish Water were removing the wire of the damaged gobions of the sea defences along the north side of Chanonry Point. FRCC were suggesting that in the face of a number of people entering the water at Chanonry Point, despite Danger signs in place, that there could be a bigger impact in installing two large red-flagged flag poles and notices to say that ebetering the water between the flags was forbidden/dangerous. AP also said that areas for Community Growing were being investigated.

Jill Stoner (Cromarty Care) said the Community Larder is being used every day and that food deliveries to six households were ongoing. She mentioned that there had been a soft launch of the Trishaws/Trikes to benefit those who were otherwise mainly indoors.

Nigel Shapcott (Cromarty Community Council etc) said that Cromarty CC was reacting to excessive noise from activities at Nigg and Invergordon. This had led to some official semi-permanent recording of noise levels, but that there were no night-time measurements when noise affected sleeping in Cromarty. NS argued that the activities should be halted at night on noise abatement grounds. Di Agnew(Highland Council) said that HC were involved in the issue.

NS noted that a Green Recovery Fund had been approached for funding of remedial work on the 100 steps footpath up the South Sutor, and an early indication of some funding would allow work on the Reeds Park Loop to be started.

Becky Richmond (Black Isle Tourism Team) referred to the UK-wide Volunteers Week (June 1 to June 7) that was mentioned by Helena and spoke about voluntourism - a venture that is being adopted by the John Muir Trust and Nature Scot - Events are organised for visitors, whereby they are given a good walk / tour of somewhere  in the morning and then in the afternoon they take part in a beach clean, path clearance, litter picking activity.    This has worked successfully in Skye and BR felt that the Black Isle might lend itself to such ventures.  See <https://volunteersweek.scot/>.

BR also mentioned that once the Nature Scot bid was complete then BITT would continue working closely with F&RCC to reform the Chanonry Point Advisory Group.   She also expressed her disappointment on discovering that Phil Waite, the Access Officer had put in an application to Nature Scot, on behalf of a number of communities, for extra rangers and that despite constant requests from F&RCC for a dedicated ranger for Chanonry Point, no one at Highland Council had thought to consider the needs of the Black Isle.

GA informed the group that the Black Isle would be getting a part time ranger.  BR expressed the view that this was not sufficient and that the Black Isle needed a full-time ranger to cover Chanonry and the top of the Soutor in Cromarty.  Di Agnew accepted the argument that Highland Council must at the minimum provide one dedicated Ranger for the Black Isle to work with local volunteers.

GA reiterated that all information from the Chanonry Point Working Group should go to Phil Waite as he was well resourced and had 17 rangers to use efficiently.

BR mentioned the need for improving signage that was a theme of the NatureScot application, particularly in Fortrose and Rosemarkie area and also noted that part of the request from RANK was to seek funds for the lighting of the steps from the A9 lay-by down to North Kessock.    GA said that the lighting was already covered through a Town Centre Fund of Highland Council, which prompted BR to highlight that such communication did not appear to reach the people actually involved in the community.

Di Agnew said that a strong Community Council in the area it should have liaised with all the community groups, and this lack of communication was regrettable.

**Agenda 4. Black Isle Partnership AGM**

Jon Palmer reminded all interested to register for the AGM to be held at 1930 to hear particularly how the Chief Executive of Scottish Rural Action, Artemis Pana, viewed the Community interactions in the Black Isle along side those elsewhere in rural Scotland

The meeting ended at 1123.